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The Naval Profession

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The United States military, while adjusting to a new role in post World War II America, has been but a part of the more profound changes taking place around it. It is therefore not surprising that confusion, doubt, and much introspective questioning have accompanied the military's attempt to understand itself and its place in society.

Since the second World War, the United States has pursued the future with an optimism and self-assurance engendered by a military success of world proportions, a rapidly expanding economy, and a trust in the validity of traditional American values and goals.

However, during the 1960's and '70's, these same values and goals came under close scrutiny. The headlong pursuit of material abundance, the lessened dependence on personal relationships, the optimism that we could solve the world's problems - our involvement in Vietnam being but a fulfillment of that philosophy - were, for many, irrelevant, if not dangerous, to our well-being.

It led us to challenge the conformity, the material goals, the institutions of our way of life. But what is important is that this challenge has passed from the radical on the fringes of society to the fabric of middle class America. Tight restraints, both social and legal, reminiscent of the Puritan ethic, have given way to a more relaxed sense of "doing your own thing",

of greater individual freedom. The search is on for a simpler, quieter, more family oriented life style.

With few exceptions, confidence in major institutions is at a low ebb. There is distrust of major companies, of organized religion, of the judicial system, of government at all levels.

The military, as the agent of the government and the major player in the drama of Vietnam, became a prime target for abuse. Abuse which those of us in uniform felt was not wholly justified. The military perceived itself responsible for conducting combat operations in response to the civilian leadership which determined national policy. The negotiation phase of the Vietnam War, like the Korean negotiations 15 years before, represented a turning point in the role of the American military. No longer was its mission soley to destroy the enemy's capabilities, but to be a bargaining instrument in obtaining an acceptable political solution. I'm not saying the United States should have fought to win, nor even that we should have been there in the first place. What I am saying is that the frustrations generated on the battlefront by political management of the campaign, coupled with the condemnation at home, fueled feelings of guilt, and unhappiness, both in the military and between the military and society. The military's and the public's perception of the military role in society differed and neither was entirely accurate. For 3 or 4 years, at the turn of this decade, public esteem for the military hit an all time low. There weren't signs in bars

and restaurants in Army towns which said, "Soldiers Not Welcome," as in the 1930's, but many Americans, especially the young, felt that way. An important difference between the 1930's and the 1970's however, is that the animosity is directed not toward the individual, but toward the uniform - the institution.

Today without a national draft for the first time in 33 years, that institution depends on the good will and acceptance of the nation in order to remain viable. Let's look specifically at the Navy.

It is very different from the Navy I entered 18 years ago and it is these differences combined with the national attitude, which are changing the nature of the profession.

- The United States Navy is physically smaller than it was just 5 years ago. We have half as many ships, 31% fewer enlisted people on active duty (a reduction of 216,000 persons) and 20,000 fewer officers comprising the smallest naval officer corps in the last quarter century. This while commitments remain relatively constant.

- Like other segments of society, the Navy, is required to do more with less. The $92.6B Defense Budget for next year, while being the largest dollar amount ever requested for defense, is the lowest budget since 1950 in constant dollar buying power. It represents 6% of the Gross National Product, a 24 year low, and has risen only $28B in current dollars since 1964 while other federal spending has risen more than 4 1/2 times as much (to $128B)

- The cost of weapons and personnel has increased, 55% of the total budget is for personnel costs. Military pay in the last year alone has risen $4B (most going for a long overdue increase in retired pay).

- Increased complexity of equipment calls for brighter, better trained people.

The demands these changes have placed on the Navy have forced a reordering of priorities and the development of programs designed to reflect and adjust for these changes. The two which I believe will influence the character of the profession most profoundly are:

1. The All Volunteer Force Program, and
2. The new Naval War College program

While the Navy has not used the draft since October 1965, it is estimated that only about 60% of Navy enlistments have been true volunteers.

When the last draft-motivated enlistee leaves the Naval Service next year, the kind of people which the Navy has been able to attract and hold, and the effectiveness of naval leadership in utilizing our diminishing resources wisely both people and things will largely determine the quality of the United States Navy for the coming decade.

Although the United States is not unique in having an all volunteer force, it's size presents special problems (U.S. mil = 1.5% of population, U.K. and Canada = less than half that %).

Much speculation has been generated as to whether an All Uolunteer Force is possible in the United States. The major questions seem to be:

- Can enough recruits be obtained?
- Will quality standards have to be reduced? (We are generally looking for the high school graduate.)
- Will a racial imbalance be created?
- Can we retain sufficient personnel in the right mix of skills, of needed quality, to meet long-range career objectives?
- Will an AVF cost too much?

First, the problem of quantity. To sustain a military force of 2.2 million and a reserve of about 1 million, nearly 460,000 officer and enlisted volunteers are required this coming year. (71,200 for USN alone). That number is comparable to the total armed forces of West Germany. One in every three available and eligible young men under 23 years of age must be recruited.

Three events since 1971 have affected volunteerism favorably:

- The military has been brought back from Vietnam. (not now actively engaged in combat anywhere).
- The civilian job market is poor.
- A special pay raise nearly doubled the pay of junior enlisted people.
- The Services greatly increased their recruiting forces as well as the quality of persons assigned to them. The Navy has established a separate recruiting command

headed by a flag officer and has given top priority to funding and personnel.

The challenge then is to attract sufficient able people, to use them more efficiently, and to continue to improve the living and working conditions so that they will want to stay in the service.

For the Navy, the rigors of sea duty provide an additional challenge in both recruitment and retention not faced by the other services. Ship deployments result in family separations. While it can be shown statistically that ship time in homeport approaches 50%, ship personnel spend about 25% of that time in overnight duty status aboard. Weekly working hours often exceed 100 hours (counting watches). Even on the newest ships, recreational facilities are minimal, living space crowded, and privacy non-existent. Deployed periods often exceed 6 months. This kind of life was accepted 20 years ago, it is not today.

How then do you successfully compete with the other Services and with civilian employers in persuading the right people to try a naval career? Recruiting has become a sales- oriented, market operation. Paid TV advertising is used. Teams visit high schools and colleges to explain what the Navy does and what a man who joins can expect in the way of duty, education, and benefits. Every expression of interest is followed up. The Navy has come to within 97% of its recruiting quota in the last year, and just this past quarter recruited 105% of its goal.

Under the imaginative leadership of Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, our soon to be retired Chief of Naval Operations, the Navy for the last 4 years has been strongly people oriented. The Navy has always been the service where you could expect three hot meals a day and sheets to sleep between at night. But, it has also been perhaps the most tradition-bound of the services - conservative, and slow to change. And the old maxim "a complaining sailor is a happy sailor" illustrates the former level of receptivity to recommendations for change from the ranks. Admiral Zumwalt has traveled extensively visiting virtually every Naval base and station in an effort to communicate personally with all levels in the Navy, especially the 1st term recruit and 1st term young officer. He tried to find out what was liked or disliked about the Navy. What made Navy life acceptable or unacceptable as a career. The young naval officer and enlistee soon realized Admiral Zumwalt was serious. He listened to them, took their recommendations seriously, and took action when warranted. If there wasn't a good reason for doing something it was stopped.

Those with good ideas were brought to Washington to work directly for him and implement their ideas. A young black lieutenant stationed in California wrote a long, thoughtful letter to Admiral Zumwalt detailing the blacks' view of the Navy, the reasons he thought the Navy was having racial problems and, for these reasons, requested that his resignation be accepted. He was asked to come to Washington to brief Admiral Zumwalt on

his ideas. He did and subsequently became special assistant to the CNO for Minority Affairs.

Admiral Zumwalt peppered the Navy with so-called "Z-Grams" - special orders designed to make the Navy a better place to live and work. Requirements and regulations which irritated many and seemed to contribute very little to the effectiveness of the organization were eliminated. For example, the Admiral said he saw no relationship between quality work and the length of hair or the presence or absence of a moustache or beard. Nor did there seem to be a good reason for denying women equal access to all Navy ratings. A few women are now qualified pilots and some are members of ships' companies. Albeit the number is small, but you know the effectiveness of the edge of a wedge.

The second major concern was whether or not quality standards would have to be reduced. The concept of quality is complex and includes physical capacity, moral behavior, trainability, intelligence, and--most importantly--motivation and discipline. The Services try to measure all of these things, before an individual is signed up, to predict whether or not he will be successful. The testing process permits enlistment of many individuals who may not have proven themselves with high school diplomas or steady jobs, yet once in the service can demonstrate a capacity to learn military jobs. At present, some 31 percent of the males in the military age group are ineligible for service.

The high school diploma is however an important indicator of quality. High school graduates tend to have fewer disciplinary problems and lower training requirements which permit a longer

period of productivity. The diploma is primarily a measure of motivation and discipline. A supplemental evaluation system during the first six months of an enlistment permits identification of those who do not have the potential for success. The underlying policy is that performance, once in the service, must be satisfactory. Unsatisfactory performers are then separated but without embarrassment either to them or to the service. Such a supplemental system was not possible while the draft was in effect, since it would have allowed draftees who did not want to be in the military to disrupt training or otherwise cause trouble, in order to be discharged. Today, personnel who make it through the training process and are assigned to units are better motivated, which reduces administrative burden and turbulence and improves unit esprit.

The most difficult recruiting problem is how to attract young people intellectually capable of filling some of the Navy's most demanding and critical jobs - those requiring training in nuclear physics and advanced electronics. The majority of those who enter the Navy for these programs do so primarily for the free education, and leave after the first or second enlistment (at the 4,6, or 8 year mark) to take jobs in industry where their skills command relatively high wages.

A number of programs have been introduced to help retain highly skilled personnel. For example: 1) reduced sea duty. As late as 1960 it was not uncommon to spend 14-15 years of a 20 year career at sea. Current policy calls for a maximum of 5 consecutive years at sea. Our goal is 3 years

at sea followed by 3 years ashore. Fleet readiness requirements have, however, delayed implementation of plans to achieve this goal; 2) reenlistment bonus. Bonuses of up to $10,000 are authorized for second term enlistees in critical skills. Generally these bonuses have been successful, however, they only apply to a small segment of the Navy and are becoming less convincing as civilian salaries inflate.

Overall enlisted first term reenlistment is about 23%. Officer retention varies from 10% for dentists and physicians, to 16% for surface officers, to 47% for pilots. Inability to retain sufficient junior officers is reflected in middle grade officer shortages.

One program designed to compensate somewhat for the difficulty in maintaining desired officer and enlisted personnel levels is termed Civilianization. It began in the early '60's to free combat forces for the Vietnam buildup. It has continued today as an aid in achieving an All Volunteer Force and in an effort to keep highly skilled military personnel aboard combatant ships where they are most needed.

Basically,"Civilianization" involves replacing the military crews on military support ships with civilians. Civilian merchant seamen are generally less expensive than military (when training and support requirements are considered); homeport and time in port requirements are lessened as the civilians are professional mariners who do not move from sea to shore jobs and whose families normally don't follow them to a specific port.

Lower manning levels on board are permitted as there are no trainees aboard as are found on military-manned ships - and some military functions, such as the Combat Information Center, are deleted. Twenty-eight ships are manned this way today. They include fleet oilers, stores ships, tugs, and cable ships.

Civilianization has had the largest impact ashore at Naval Air Stations, Naval Stations, and Supply Depots. Approximately 40,000 jobs have been civilianized since 1967. While there has been some criticism that shifting some work like cleaning the mess halls, doing kitchen chores, and upkeep of barracks, to a civilian work force is a mistake, the decision to remove irritants of this nature was designed to professionalize the man in uniform, not make him lazy. The philosophy is to rid the military person of tasks unrelated to his military mission and which only take time away from training and his job. By increasing the professional atmosphere and the prospect of challenging work, the young, questioning enlistee of today can feel he is making a meaningful contribution, not just participating in make-work projects.

The third major question relating to the All Volunteer Force concerns racial imbalance. Would a force of this nature primarily attract the lower classes, the poor, the uneducated - looking for a home, adequate pay, social mobility? The military has adopted the attitude that all Americans should be given equal opportunity for a military career if one is desired.

That establishing artificial quotas to control racial balance would be inimical with this goal and that, finally, quality not race should be the driving factor in recruiting. With high entrance standards for enlistment, any applicant who can demonstrate his ability and willingness to perform a military mission and is physically fit, is accepted. Performance is the sole basis upon which an individual is retained or excluded.

To date it looks as if we can maintain the forces we need with volunteers alone. It is requiring the military to treat the individual more as an individual, and our most important asset. It is forcing us to make better use of his talents, to abandon outdated personnel policies, to modernize and humanize our approach to leadership and training.

Education, particularly of future military leaders, is of paramount importance in a democracy. It reflects not only a prudent and systematic effort to think about the profession but it encourages the career officer better to understand his relationship to and role in society at large. In the United States there are five colleges which provide mid-career education to military officers of Lieutenant Colonel/Colonel rank and civilian government professionals of equivalent rank:

- The National War College in Washington DC
- The Industrial College of the Armed Forces in Washington DC
- The Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island
- The Air War College in Alabama and the
- The Army War College in Pennsylvania

The colleges are administered separately and although their courses of instruction differ, they all aim to prepare the individual for increased responsibility. The class at each college is a mixture of representatives from each of the military Services and certain government agencies. However, the majority of naval officers attend the Naval War College. This is especially significant because last year, after extensive program and curriculum rethinking, the Naval War College broke away philosophically from her four sister schools. The College's mission has changed, a new curriculum established, a large number of new faculty recruited and a somewhat changed student body enrolled. I am personally convinced the Naval War College's new philosophy anticipates by several years the trend of all military mid-career education in the United States and will have a profound and salubrious effect on the military profession.

Since the 1940's, technological knowledge as well as its practical application has expanded at an unprecedented rate. The profusion of fresh concepts and theories, new material and novel systems has accelerated technical obsolescence. It has also accelerated the obsolescence of the specialized training of individuals who must understand, use, or sustain these systems. Twenty-five years ago you could educate an engineer or scientist or naval officer and expect that education to be useful most or all of his career. Today, 3 to 5 years of usefulness is about the maximum. So this hypothetical engineer or naval officer must either be provided with major periodic updatings at key stages in his career or given a basic

education that is timeless in nature and which will give him the necessary tools and inspiration to update himself through a lifelong self-education program. Perhaps some combination of these two options is necessary. What is certain is that an individual cannot be given a one-time innoculation against ignorance. Factual knowledge is perishable. Conditions change, technology changes, but somehow, if we are to remain competitive in our profession, and productive in our particular job, we must keep abreast of developments and changes.

For the naval officer, this perishability of his technical ecuation must be considered in light of three other developments which, over the past decade, have combined to change the demands that he and the Navy must face.

First, both the form and substance of United States foreign policy and national strategy are undergoing fundamental alteration. In this process, the military has become less persuasive in the public forum and standard rationales for military preparedness are challenged as shallow, outdated, and no longer valid.

Second, the sharp rise in the costs of military personnel and hardware which I mentioned earlier, accent more than ever the stiff competition for limited national resources. This is forcing a careful ordering of national priorities. This is as it should be. Proposed programs must be carefully and realistically appraised and only the best funded. The amount of funds the Navy receives will be increasingly a function of how our chosen alternatives compare with those of others.

Third, the United States Navy no longer has a clear qualitative and quantitative advantage at sea. We have a long and successful maritime heritage, but future success will depend less on overwhelming our opponents and more on clever, innovative strategy and tactics employed against equal or more powerful forces.

How then does one take the average midcareer officer--an individual from a Newtonian world of right and wrong answers to clearly defined questions; whose experience has been with technical systems demanding precise solutions, and military command and control networks properly calling for unambiguous response--and educate him for the future?

After considering many alternative approaches, it was decided that the average War College student needed to gain an appreciation for the broader issues of the military and government, improve his decision-making ability, and gain confidence in handling uncertainty. A course was constructed to involve him in varying problems of decision, beset with uncertainty and imprecision like those faced daily in real-life, and focused on real world cases in the areas of strategy, defense economics, and naval tactics. The academic year is divided roughly in thirds, one for each area.

By reflecting on strategy within its historic context the professional develops depth and perception. He assesses the world in broader rather than narrower terms. He becomes

less defensive and parochial and more comprehending of deficiencies, mistakes and events. He understands he is but one facet of an immensely complex social fabric, and in the nature of a republic not the dominant factor.

In acquiring a knowledge of management, decision-theory, and budgeting the professional becomes not only better equipped to lead his own profession, but he becomes versed in the fiscal checks and balances of federal funding and political decision-making. By becoming the modern military executive, he better serves the nation as a responsible public official.

In assessing tactics-current, past, and most importantly, future, the officer student works on the frontier of his profession. Adulation of past victories and successful tactics does not guarantee future security. The proficient professional must constantly question the value, the effectiveness and the appropriateness of the real-time equation of men, hardware and maneuver.

Thus through a curriculum which stresses problem solving rather than contemporary factual data, the student is guided in his approach to representative problems in the hope of providing him with a way of approaching, analyzing, and logically solving any problem. The solution is never dictated by the school. The route to the solution is what is important.

The stress is on individual effort rather than the spoon-fed, passive absorption of lectures. The Strategy and Policy Course, in particular, is modelled after the Oxford

methodology: readings, tutorials, and small discussion groups. Each week the student is assigned approximately 1000 pages of reading and has no more than 6 scheduled hours with the remainder left unstructured. He is required to produce one term paper of substance on an agreed topic and take a final examination which is largely interpretive in nature. The student is challenged to read, to think, to grow. Hopefully he acquires the attitude, if he didn't already have it, that his War College experience is only a start to a process of self-education which will continue the rest of his life.

The future of higher education in the United States is tending in the same direction - toward widespread, continuing education instead of the degree-oriented, one-shot education with which most Americans grew up. The ubiquity of the college degree has debased the degree system and is rapidly making the degree a less critical factor of employment. Like the growing community colleges and centers of adult education, the Naval War College realistically provides the student with the tools he needs to continue his process of self-education.

The curriculum I have just described aims primarily at the generalist, the middle or upper echelon operator or manager who must make the Navy's decisions.

But, the Navy needs two kinds of leaders; they are the same kinds of leaders needed in middle and upper level civilian management: one is the operational decision-maker I have just described whose education should combine broad factual knowledge

with an understanding of decision-making techniques. He must be able to identify problems, make daily operational or management decisions, and plan for the future; the other is the creative thinker, an individual who, free of daily operational concerns, can depart intellectually from what is known and can recognize what is translatable into valid, useful concepts. He can provide new techniques, strategies, or tactics to solve known or not yet appreciated problems.

The Department of Advanced Research at the Naval War College seeks to identify and nourish creative thinking of value and interest to the Navy. The challenge of developing a program whereby all War College resources can be used to support original thinking without smothering the spark of whatever makes creative genius is a difficult one. First creative talent must be recognized and encouraged to spend a year or two in research. The greatest danger is selecting the wrong people for the wrong reasons. Well-rounded, excellent overall performance is not the criterion. Often the individual who has peaks of genius in a narrow area and may be poor or indifferent in other areas is the unconventional individual who irritates with his skeptical, intolerant viewpoint, questioning accepted knowledge or opinion. Because of his attitude or general performance he is often pushed aside, fails, or is otherwise is lost. Thus the most difficult aspect of selection is to differentiate between the successful, but uninspired, performer and the individual, whatever his past performance might have been, who has brilliant insights and original solutions to problems.

Second, a satisfactory faculty is difficult to assemble. Because the creative phase of research is often relatively loose, informal, and personal, those who guide it must not be distressed by lack of structure. The time-proven method of nurturing creative research or thinking is to associate the researcher with someone who has himself demonstrated creative ability and, most important, has an infectious spirit which he can transfer to his protege. Any rigidity or inability to understand the creative mind can be fatal in this guidance role.

Third, the War College provides a supportive environment. The researcher is freed of minor constraints. The research program caters to the developmental patterns of the individual not artificial boundaries. Interaction between other researchers and faculty members is encouraged because it affects judgment and forces a critical assessment of ideas.

And so, for the first time really, the Navy is making a determined effort not only to encourage innovative thinking, but to provide a locus for creative research away from operational pressures and time constraints.

The fundamental task of the military profession has not changed. But, as the Navy recognizes the need to reflect more accurately the mores of the society of which it is a part, and as the nature of military tools changes, the fundamental character of the American Naval profession changes. The naval

officer today must be aware that organizational and individual goals are not always the same. That while priority must still be give to organizational effectiveness, greater attention must be payed to the needs of the individual. He must better understand individual and group behavior, must appreciate the importance of positive motivation and job satisfaction, and must be prepared intellectually to handle the difficult and often deceptively subtle problems of resource allocation. Authority and command are no longer enough to ensure the effectiveness of a military unit.